

From the Desk of the Pastor

Dear Friends,



For the past four months, you have been hearing and praying about the Archdiocesan initiative to "Renew My Church." Each Sunday, after communion, we have prayed this prayer asking the Holy Spirit to guide us in this effort. All parishes are now being asked to form groupings to begin working on the next phase of this initiative to reconfigure the parishes in this Archdiocese for the future.

At this moment, we are paired with St. Cornelius as our grouping. Parish Council leaders have met at each parish to begin discussions of how we might cooperate and coordinate efforts to form a stronger relationship with each other. Soon we will meet together to share ideas and hopes that we have for the future of our Church and how we might look as we begin to share programs, ministries, and personnel.

After viewing the brief video presentation from Archbishop Cupich, which can be found by visiting the parish web site, council leaders had these things to share:

1. A feeling of confusion about the uncertainty of the future of our parishes;
2. A lack of a plan clearly identified from the Archbishop;
3. The need for stronger leadership in the Archdiocese, including the role of the Archbishop in this process;
4. The need to eradicate competition between parishes/schools within our communities;

The identification of a management style that is antiquated and needs updating- a corporate structure that has many layers, difficult to navigate, and moves too slowly for effective change. In looking at our parish community, it was noted that we have a facility that still resembles 1950, with an unimaginative style of architecture. While the community is stable, this lends itself to no real movement or possibility for growth.

These are just a few of the particular challenges noted by our leaders. In the coming weeks, we will share this information with the other parishes in our groupings, right now, St. Cornelius and see what they have to share with us. This conversation will be shared within the deanery as well as with the Archdiocese, as we meet together as priests on October 4th and begin to fashion a plan/vision for the future of our parishes.

What I shared with you is just the beginning of the conversations being held. More will come as the process unfolds. The consensus of the priests and parish leaders in this process, is that we need to take an aggressive approach with the reconfiguration of parishes. No matter what the process, it will be painful when letting go is required. But the time has come, and is actually ten years overdue. A fair and close examination of mission vitality, finances, and personnel, will be the criteria used to make some of the very difficult decisions.

Soon the results of the on line survey regarding where people within our parishes attend Mass when not attending here, will be available. As you can imagine, there is considerable cross-over among the neighboring parishes, a phenomenon more prevalent in the city than in the suburbs- simply more to choose from at the moment.

In the meantime, it becomes our responsibility to pray for our Church and ourselves, as the people of God, to yield to the working of the Holy Spirit, to stay positive and hopeful, and as our prayer says, to stay together in charity. I believe if we do this, we will see good things happen, and we, along with our Church, will be renewed.

Fr. Mike